

# Cooperative Education Students take NASA to the classroom

By Julie Burt

With the help of JSC Cooperative Education Students (co-ops), Humble High School students saw the past and the future of NASA last month.

The co-ops shared Apollo-era space relics with the students and they also shared stories of their JSC work experience. Although they are college students, co-ops still contribute in significant ways that benefit the future of the space program.

As the co-ops spoke, the word “pyrotechnics” brought a gleam to the eye of several students. Also, many young women sat in awe of the female NASA employees, who talked about their work on the Cycleometer on the International Space Station or their efforts to help design space suits that astronauts may use on future missions.

This event was part of the High School Outreach Program, which is orchestrated each spring and fall by the co-ops at JSC. The co-ops meet during their free time to plan and prepare for the outreach activities.

“I volunteered for this activity because, even though Houston’s nickname is ‘Space City,’ so few people in Houston know of the opportunities at Johnson Space Center,” said Alicia Baker, a co-op in the Fund Management Division, Resources and Fund Control Group.

“I graduated from a high school 50 miles from JSC,” she said, “and I never knew I could work or research here. I want to make sure other Houston area high school students know.”

All of the high school students had the opportunity to look at and touch some of the space helmets from the Apollo era. They were then challenged to pick up a quarter off their desks using an EVA glove. They saw some of the space food that the astronauts eat, and a few were able to try on an astronaut space suit.

For more information on the co-op program, go to:  
<http://coop.jsc.nasa.gov>



**“We all dream about one** day going back to the Moon or onwards to Mars; outreach provides us the opportunity to share our ambitions and enthusiasm for space with the community, getting the spirit of exploration revived.

*– Jayleen Guttromson, an Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering major at Purdue University who works in the Crew and Thermal Systems Division*

**“The High School Outreach** program brings the co-ops together and helps us appreciate the potential we have as college students to make an impact on someone who is exactly where we were a few years ago.

*– Kelly Halacka, a senior at Case Western Reserve University who works in the Biomedical Systems Division*

NASA JSC 2002e47188 Photo by David DeHoyos

## University of Houston co-op leads recruiting effort

Reynaldo Guerra, a senior in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Houston, goes beyond the call of duty to help students like him.

Guerra arranges and leads tours of Johnson Space Center each fall for students from his university who are interested in the co-op program. He started the tours in 1999. They have developed into what Co-op Program Manager Bob Musgrove calls the recruiting effort for University of Houston students.

So what made Guerra, the first in his family to attend college and a student very involved with both classes and extracurricular activities, begin this crusade to bring University of Houston students to see JSC?

“I was frustrated because I was the only engineering co-op from the University of Houston,” he said. “There are some extraordinary minds at the University of Houston. I felt NASA and UH were mutually missing out on some valuable opportunities. I was, and still am, frustrated with the level of interest in the space program, especially here in the Houston area.”

Guerra said he hopes that his work will help remind locals of the treasure in their neighborhood. “Maybe because NASA is in Houston’s back yard Houstonians are immune to the truly amazing work that we do here,” he said. “I see the tours as an opportunity to open the eyes of Houstonians, 40 pair at a time. Hey, every little bit helps!”

Thanks to Guerra’s efforts, three engineering students have been hired by JSC. One of them even led the University of Houston tour of JSC one semester while Guerra was back at school. ♦

**Read more about Guerra at**  
<http://coop.jsc.nasa.gov/biography/bios/guerrar.htm>

**Above:**  
A Humble High School student tries on a helmet during the co-ops’ visit.  
**Right:** Another HHS student tries on a glove.



NASA JSC 2002e47176 Photo by David DeHoyos



NASA JSC 2002e47336 Photo by James Blair

**Reynaldo Guerra, right, leads a tour of Building 9 for University of Houston students.**